

531 decorate a burial pole; and others, Pl. 2D, Pl. 10C, and Pl. 11A, similar to those he would paint on the ceremonial baskets.

I did not see or hear of figures being made in bark (Mountford, 1956, p. 443, fig. 65C, D); moulded in wax (Elkin and the Berndts, 1950, Pl. 21, Mountford, 1956, Pl. 143) or in the sands of the sea-shore (Mountford, 1956, p. 404, Pl. 91C, D), as is done in north-eastern Arnhem Land. Nevertheless, * [532] the men did carve large burial poles in the form of human beings and smaller full-length figures, associated with the *pukamuni* ceremonies. These figures bore some small resemblance to those recorded from north-eastern Arnhem Land (Berndt, 1948, Figs. A, B, Pls. 1, 2; Mountford, 1956, Pls. 130-40).

3. TECHNIQUES

386 (a) COLOURS. The pigments used for the decoration of the burial poles and the production of the bark paintings, were red, yellow and white ochres. As there was no suitable black pigment on the islands, the artists used crushed charcoal in its place.

[317] The source of the best ochres is a pit at Imilu on Cape Van Diemen (Fig. 1). This ochre, called *imilu*, is a bright yellow when collected,⁷ but, when heated in the fire, it changes to a clear red. A soft white stone is common along the beaches. The ochres are not ground on a stone, as on the mainland (Mountford, 1956, p. 11), but, being friable, are crushed and mixed in a large cockle shell with water and fixative.

The aborigines often spoke of a superior ochre at Numanira, northern Melville Island (Fig. 1), which could be gathered only at low tide. I did not see any of this ochre in use.

[314] (b) FIXATIVES. Three different types of fixative are used to ensure that the painted designs, both on the poles and the baskets, were as permanent as possible. They were: the sticky gelatinous sap of one of the tree orchids (*Dendrobium* sp.); the wax and honey of the wild bee, well mixed together; [237] and the yolks of the eggs of the sea-going turtle. The fixative was either mixed with the pigments or rubbed on the painting surface.

412 (c) BRUSHES. Simple brushes, made of strips of bark of varying widths, square across the bottom, chewed at one end, and held as in Fig. 2A and 2C, were used for the bulk of the work.⁸ For making the dots, however, the artists used a

[423] ⁷ There did not appear to be any restriction on the gathering of this ochre; any aboriginal could go to Imilu and take as much as he wished.

[171] ⁸ The long flexible brush of the aborigines of Arnhem Land (Mountford, 1956, p. 12, fig. 5), was not used at Melville Island, although the bark brush (Fig. 2C) was often held in a similar manner.

THE CREATION PERIOD

47

Pl. 10a pictures Mundinju, the place where the two sisters, *Wilindula* and *Numanirakala* camped before the former made her home at Willindu, and the latter at Numanira. ^{532*} 778

The central black disc is Mundinju; the smaller black discs, throughout the painting, are holes in the cliffs from which seep streams of fresh water. The long, radiating panels are bands of red and yellow ochres in the cliffs, the groups of parallel lines, gutters formed in the cliffs, where *Wilindula* urinated; and the groups of chevron designs, ferns growing among the rocks.

The Red-ochre Woman, Numanirakala, at Numanira

Numanira, created by *Numanirakala*, is a partly submerged reef a short distance from Wulrungku (Karatlake Island), north-western Melville Island. ⁷⁷⁸

At low tide, the aborigines collect one of the best ochres in the country from this locality, even better than that from Imilu (Fig. 1), for, although Imilu ochres are brightest when used dry, those from Numanira are best when mixed with water. [317] ●

The central design on Pl. 12a indicates the flat rocks of the submerged islet at Numanira, while similar designs, above and below, are other rocks near by. The darker-coloured segments in these three designs indicate the red ochre, and the lighter segments the mud on the sea bottom. The white circles represent sea-weed, the darker, small rocks under the water, and the dots, the corals growing on those rocks. ^{532*} 778

The central black disc of Pl. 12b is Numanira; the surrounding white circle, the sand on the sea floor, and the narrow darker line on the periphery, the red ochre, for which the island is noted.

The radiating black panels symbolize clams, the lighter panels, oysters, both of which are plentiful on the rocks of the island. The outer circle is the mud, and the dots are bunches of weed on the sea-bottom.

The Spider-woman, Baraka, at Rungani

During *palmeri* times, the spider-woman, *Baraka*, who lived at Rungani, made a bark basket for the *putamuni* of *Purukupali*. She first stripped a sheet of bark from a eucalyptus tree, heated it over the fire to make it flexible, then, bending it double, sewed the edges together with split lawyer vine. From that day until now, the women of Melville and Bathurst Islands have made their baskets in the same manner. After the *putamuni* of *Purukupali*, *Takindini* instructed his wife, *Baraka*, to establish a totemic place at Rungani, northern Melville Island. ⁷⁷³ [462] 773

322

HERBERT BASEDOW.—Notes on the NATIVES OF
BATHURST ISLAND, NORTH AUSTRALIA

PLATE X.

501 Fig. 1. "Fish-tail" bark canoes, Apsley Strait.

Fig. 2. "Fish-tail" bark canoes and "dug-out" canoe in the distance, Apsley Strait. Melville Island in the background.

PLATE XI.

Figs. 1 and 2. Bow and stern of "fish-tail" bark canoe. $\frac{1}{10}$ natural size.Fig. 3 and 4. Balers made out of the melon shell. Fig. 3 shows the painted decoration of the outer surface; while in Fig. 4 it is seen how the columella of the shell has been removed with a sharp cutting instrument. $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.

PLATE XII.

314 Fig. 1. Forest scene on Bathurst Island. From the stringy-barked eucalyptus on the left side of the picture, the bark has been removed for the purpose of making a canoe. Another tree, which has been similarly treated, is seen in the background, near the centre of the picture. In the foreground note a tall specimen of the zamia-palm (*Cycas media*).
396
137501 Fig. 2. Various types of paddles in use on Bathurst Island. About $\frac{1}{10}$ natural size.

PLATE XIII.

764 Fig. 1 and 2. Distant and near view of a native grave, surrounded by five carved and painted posts, Bathurst Island. Note the cleared space and the position of grave, viz.: at the junction between open woodland and thicket. A tall Bathurst Islander is seen in Fig. 2.

PLATE XIV.

415 Fig. 1. A melon-shell (*Melo dindema*) used as a drinking vessel. $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.Fig. 2. A *Fusus princei* used as a drinking vessel. $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.Figs. 3 and 4. Drinking cups made out of folded sheets of paper-bark (*Melaleuca*). $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.532 Figs. 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e. Painted and carved posts of native grave shown in previous plate.
764 $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.

PLATE XV.

415 Fig. 1. A series of four shells of the *Cyrena siningtonensis* which have been used for holding red, white and yellow earth-pigments to mix with water as required. $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.● 317 Fig. 2. Lumps of yellow ochre (on the left), white pipe-clay (in the centre), and red ochre (on the right), used in the decoration of the grave posts shown in previous plate.
396 $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.413 Fig. 3. Primitive paint brushes made by macerating the ends of short pieces of the shoots of the climbing palm (*Calamus australis*). $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.301 Figs. 4 and 5. Special corroboree arm-rings. $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.532 Fig. 6. A corroboree mask (?). $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.

PLATE XVI.

291 Figs. 1 and 2. Bathurst Island natives painting grave-posts. Note the cosmetic body-scars in imitation of the leaf of the zamia palm (*Cycas media*).
532
764

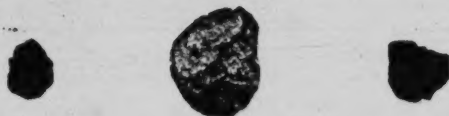
415

1



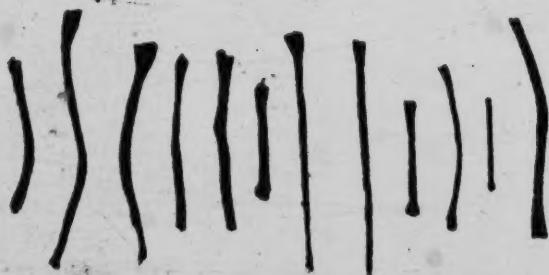
317
386

2



413

3



301

4



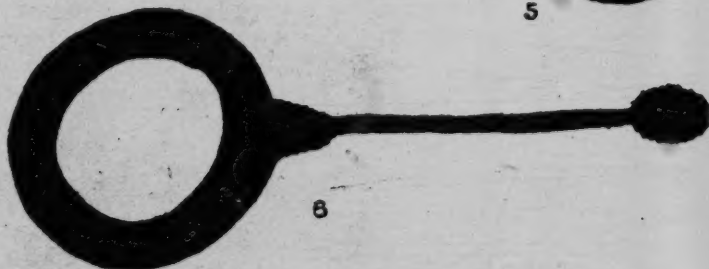
532

5



301

6



NOTES ON THE NATIVES OF RATHURST ISLAND, NORTH AUSTRALIA.

[END PLATE 9]

[FOR EXPLANATION SEE P. 322 - ANALYST]